

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ARTICLE ON SPANISH PURCHASES OF FRENCH JETS

1. WASHINGTON POST ON JANUARY 31 CARRIES ARTICLE DATED
MADRID BY MIGUEL ACOCA SAYING THAT SPAIN "HAS DECIDED" TO
PURCHASE 48 FRENCH MIRAGE F-1 JETS IN AN \$800 MILLION DEAL,
CAUSING AN "INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT IN PLANS TO PURCHASE 72
US F-16'S FROM GENERAL DYNAMICS", CITING DIPLOMATIC AND
INDUSTRY SOURCES. ARTICLE, WHICH IS BEING TRANSMITTED TO
EMBASSY MADRID BY USIA, GOES ON TO NOTE THAT THE GOS HAS
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PAGE 02 STATE 025576

NOT CONFIRMED THE DECISION, AND DISCUSSES THE ATTENDANT
POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS (I.E., THE EEC CONNECTION), THE
COMPETITION BETWEEN GENERAL DYNAMICS AND DASSAULT, AND THE
TERMS OF THE PROSPECTIVE PURCHASE FROM FRANCE. THE ARTICLE
ALSO NOTES REFERENCES TO THE F-16 IN THE 1976 TREATY,
COMMENTING THAT THE REASON FOR THE REFERENCE IS UNKNOWN AND
ADDING THAT SPANISH OFFICIALS, NOTWITHSTANDING US DENIALS,

CONTEND THAT THE SECTION WAS INCLUDED AT KISSINGER'S INSISTENCE.

2. DEPARTMENT PLANS TO USE THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE IN RESPONSE TO POSSIBLE QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE ARTICLE:

Q. THE WASHINGTON POST SAYS THAT A SPANISH DECISION TO BUY 48 FRENCH MIRAGES HAS CAUSED A POSTPONEMENT IN PLANS TO PURCHASE 72 US F-16'S. IS THIS CORRECT?

A. NO, IT ISN'T. THERE WERE NO "PLAN" OR COMMITMENTS BY SPAIN TO PURCHASE F-16'S. IN LINE WITH US COMMITMENTS UNDER THE 1976 TREATY, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS PROVIDED DATA FOR SPANISH CONSIDERATION, AND HAS AUTHORIZED GENERAL DYNAMICS TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT ABOUT PROSPECTIVE F-16 PURCHASES.

WE HAVE NO INFORMATION AT THIS TIME THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS REACHED A DECISION ON THE PURCHASE OF ANY NEW AIRCRAFT. A SPANISH DECISION TO PURCHASE FRENCH F-1'S WOULD IN ANY EVENT NOT PRECLUDE A FUTURE SPANISH PURCHASE OF US PLANES AS SPAIN MOVES AHEAD WITH MODERNIZATION OF ITS AIR FORCE.

Q. WHY WERE PROVISIONS CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF F-16'S PUT INTO THE 1976 US-SPANISH TREATY?
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PAGE 03 STATE 025576

A. THE SECTION OF THE 1976 TREATY REFERRING TO THE F-16 READS: "THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES AGREES TO MAKE THE MAXIMUM EFFORT TO FACILITATE ACQUISITION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN OF FOUR COMPLETE SQUADRONS (OF 18 AIRCRAFT EACH) OF F-16 LIGHT FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, OR OTHERS OF SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS."

THIS SECTION WAS INCLUDED IN THE TREATY BY MUTUAL CONSENT AS A RESULT OF SPAIN'S DESIRE TO MODERNIZE ITS AIR FORCE BY THE MID-1980'S. VANCE

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